

Dream Big

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By Tim Waisanen

On October 1, 1971, five years after the great Walt Disney passed away, Disney World held its grand opening for the Magic Kingdom. During the dedication ceremony, one of the executives turned to Mrs. Disney and said, "Isn't it a shame that Walt didn't live to see this?" Mrs. Disney replied, "He did see it--that's why it's here!" This is what vision is all about.

Even with the enormity of what Disney has become, the founder's vision began with something simple. Walt said, "I only hope that we never lose sight of one thing . . . that it was all started with a mouse."

God's Word says, "Despise not small beginnings." Begin small, and watch God give you more. Your vision may be tiny, or even non-existent, right now, but as you take steps of obedience, it will grow. Being faithful to your

practical purpose now will allow you to step into your future vision later. When you begin to live out your vision where you are right now, God will provide for your needs and continue to expand it.

Vision involves seeing what others don't. Walt saw what others didn't, and it had a huge impact on the world, the movie industry, animation and theme parks. It was the clarity of Walt's bigger vision that gave him the power to live out his practical purpose. We must get a vision for our lives so that we can fulfill the spiritual and practical purposes God has for us.

Walt said, "A good ending is vital to a picture, the single most important element, because it is what the audience takes with them out of the theater." So I ask you this: What does the movie of your life look like? When your life comes to a close, what do you want those in the audience to walk away with? What do you want to be known for? What do you want your life's legacy to be? We clearly see the impact of Walt's life and vision. What about yours?

FIND A BIBLICAL VISION

True vision comes from God and leads to purposeful living. Without a vision, we walk around lost—just surviving instead of thriving. We lose hope and slowly drift away from God. However, when we get a vision, we begin to live the abundant life for which God created us.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) says, "Where there is no vision the people perish, but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Most of the time this scripture is shared, pastors and preachers tend to focus on the negative aspect of it: People are perishing without vision. However, I believe it's a two-sided coin. There is a converse truth: Where there is vision, people will live!

Your life's vision can only come from God. The word "vision" in Proverbs 29:18 is the Hebrew word *châzôwn*. It refers to a divine vision, dream, or revelation. God must reveal what He wants us to do, or we will run wild and perish! All vision and revelation come from God—having God's perspective about our lives and the world in which we live. To get clarity

about His vision, His point of view, we must get His perspective—we must come higher and get closer to Him to see what He sees.

Isaiah 55:9 says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.” Seeing things God’s way will help us see beyond the obstacles and challenges, the excuses, and fears, beyond all the unknowns and uncertainties.

Many times, life beats us down and we lose hope, which leads to a lack of vision. The storms bring doubt, fear, and disappointment. We wonder why God is allowing this to happen. Unless we go higher in our perspective, we won’t be able to see the purpose in it all. Hope in God gives you panoramic vision—a vision that’s colorful, clear and beyond your natural ability. Our victory as Christians lies in us getting God’s perspective. Once we do that, we can see into the vision and the future that He has for us.

SIGNIFICANCE AND DIFFERENCE

Find your difference, and you will find your purpose. A key to finding purpose is discovering the vision you’re passionate about and fulfilling it differently than anyone else. While Walt Disney had a big vision, there was something about his vision that separated him from all the others. What he did was unique from what others had done or attempted.

Even his own wife questioned him about his vision. Walt shared, “When I started on Disneyland, my wife used to say, ‘But why do you want to build an amusement park? They’re so dirty.’ I told her that was just the point: Mine wouldn’t be.” Walt’s significance was hidden in his vision of building an amusement park differently than anybody else ever had!

Daring to dream differently requires asking yourself some key questions: What do you do that’s unique? If I were to line up ten thousand people who do what you do (or want to do), what would make you different? How do you sing, draw, think, help others or lead in your own special way? How do your talents stick out from the crowd?

When you find that, you'll discover the very reason God has created you! As Rick Warren says in *The Purpose-Driven Life*, "God designed each of us so there would be no duplication in the world. No one has the exact same mix of factors that make you unique. That means no one else on earth will ever be able to play the role God planned for you."

In order to get a vision, you must discover your significance through your difference. This is what daring to dream differently is all about. God gives us the ability to see what others don't. Start dreaming big, start dreaming differently and change the world!

Here's another important point about your difference: Being different requires being authentic. God's anointing flows through your authenticity! Don't try to be just like someone else; don't succumb to the pressure to be bigger than anyone else. Be the best version of you that you can be. Be the best you God created! The anointing--His power on your life's vision--comes through being authentic.

So many people minimize what God is calling them to do based on what it looks like in the natural: the opportunity, the numbers, the size--how many people they're influencing. They discount their purpose and dwarf their calling because they don't feel that it's significant. Your effectiveness is not based solely on numbers. If God has called you to do something, then it is significant!

I'll never forget what Mike Coleman, a mentor of mine, said one day: "Tim, I am not a good dad based upon the quantity of kids I have, but on the quality of kids I raise!" Having more kids doesn't make me a better dad, but spending better time with them does. That's always stuck with me. You may not be impacting thousands of people, but to that one person you are reaching you mean everything. Impact as many as you can but remember that it's not about the quantity of people or the size of the vision. It's about the quality of the impact and the transformation that takes place as a result.

Now that we've laid a foundation for vision and its importance, I want to show you two simple steps you can take to discover your vision: narrowing your focus and making those strengths better.

STEP 1: NARROW YOUR FOCUS

What is your brand? What do you want to be known for? Most people are known for one main thing they did on this earth. When I say Michael Jordan, Paul McCartney, George Lucas, Jennifer Lopez, Steve Jobs, Martin Luther King, Jr., Billy Graham, or Tiger Woods, what comes to mind? Usually, there is one main thing they're known for.

Your experiences help fine-tune your vision story and purpose statement. If this hasn't happened yet, just wait—it will. When you begin to live with purpose, your experiences will help you discover what's different about you. You'll be able to narrow your focus—gain clarity on what you really want to do and how.

When I started out in youth ministry, I was a generalist. I did all things youth ministry: the fun and crazy games, retreats and camps, youth services, invite nights, preaching, relationship building, mission trips. For the first 15 years, I experienced what worked and what didn't, what areas I felt called to and what I was best at. This process helped me gain clarity about my unique contributions and differences, so that I could narrow my focus. I now focus my life primarily on what I'm best at: preaching, counseling, and purpose training.

Everything in your life will eventually lead to you narrowing your focus. It may take years, but now you're aware of what you can look for—you can be at peace, even though you don't have it all figured out yet. After all, who does?

Here's another important point: Narrowing your focus makes it easier to say no! Once you narrow your focus, your yes becomes so important that it's easy to turn down opportunities that don't align with your vision. In Greg McKeown's book, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, the

author's main value proposition is this: "Only once you give yourself permission to stop trying to do it all, stop saying yes to everyone, can you make your highest contribution to the things that really matter." God will put a vision in your heart that will require saying no to more things. Learn to say no so that you can say yes to what you're most effective at doing!

Over my years in youth ministry, I narrowed my focus and discovered my "dream." I have a dream that every teenager and young adult can discover the abundant life Jesus promises in His Word! I want to spend the rest of my life helping young people find their identity, freedom, and purpose through Christ. My and my wife's ultimate big-picture vision is to "awaken purpose within young leaders to influence every area of culture with the gospel." That's what I'm best at, and all I want to do.

I've seen many young people fall away from their faith because they haven't addressed and resolved key issues in their lives. I've seen so much doubt about who God is. I want young people to experience the real Jesus. It was my key experiences that caused me to realize the "brand" of my life: to be known as the best youth speaker, counselor and purpose trainer on the planet. When people think of needing someone to speak at their young adult event, to counsel their teen, or to help young adults find God's purpose and get unstuck, I want my name on the top of that list. I want my life to reflect the glory of God in this way.

What do you want to be known for? What does God want the brand of your life to be?

STEP 2: FIND YOUR GIFT AND MAKE IT BETTER

Narrowing our focus will allow us to utilize our strengths for maximum impact. When we focus on making our strengths better, our gifts will open doors we never even imagined! My focus on bettering my gift has opened doors around the world I could never have dreamed would open for me.

Focusing on strength is the foundation of the Disney Principle. Disney takes a good idea and dreams up ways to make it even better. When

Disney Imagineers develop an idea, they'll ask questions such as, "How is this different than what anybody else has built? What can we do to make it better?" Utilizing their strengths, they consider how they can improve and take their offerings to the next level.

You are a gift to the world. What you do with your life is your gift back to God! When you get a vision and focus on your gifts, doors will open, and you will become a blessing to those around you. Consider this statement as it relates to your life:

When I am doing _____, heaven comes to earth and has an impact on others.

What are you good at, and how can you become even better at it? What skills of yours have had a positive impact on others? Proverbs 18:16 (my paraphrase) says, "A man's gift will make room for him and will bring him in front of prominent men." Walt Disney's gift brought him in front of the wealthiest, most powerful, and most famous people alive.

We don't have to make room for our gifts; our gifts will make room for us. They will open doors so that we can fulfill the vision of God. Once you find your difference, clarify your vision, and narrow your focus, you can maximize your strengths and live out your purpose. Remember, purpose is a process. This process includes getting a vision for your life, dreaming differently, and becoming the best at your dream that you can be.

Is your heart good soil, ready for God to plant His vision into it? If soil is dry, or lacks nutrients, seeds cannot grow. Get your heart to a place where it's ready and willing to receive God's vision!

God chose you to be born at this time in history. He created you with specific talents, abilities, and gifts. He has a vision for you to fulfill. Maybe you're struggling with finding it; maybe you have some idea of what it looks like but are afraid to step out in faith. When we are in His presence, He will pour out His Spirit and put His dreams into our hearts. Get your

heart ready and ask with expectation for Him to reveal His vision for your life!

Walt Disney's vision was so big that it is still impacting the world today. Walt started with a mouse. The first night I ever had a youth service, it was just me and one kid playing basketball. Dream big but begin small. God is calling you to dream differently and solve a problem.

Our vision should be big enough that it impacts others after we are gone. Narrow your focus, use your strengths and do it in a unique way. Be willing to step out in faith. Risk comparisons, risk failure, risk the I-told-you-so accusations, risk security, risk provision. Take a chance on God. Dream differently. Dream big. Take a step, and watch God fulfill His vision for your life.

When you close your eyes, what do you see? What are you doing? Who are you doing it with? Who are you doing it for, and what is the impact you have? Can you see it, like a movie preview? At the end of your life, what will people say about you? What will they thank you for the most? What prayers to God will your life answer? What are you doing that causes heaven to come down to earth?